



VB NEWS & NOTES

Experts Say Stressful Times Can Cause Difficult Behavior

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The cover of Newsweek has declared that the recession is over. For many people and businesses, it doesn't feel much like it. Stressful times continue, and anxious people can be rude or abusive.

Now is the ideal time to think about the principles of etiquette: honesty, respect and consideration. They keep personal and professional relationships solid, says Peggy Post, director of the Emily Post Institute.

* Consider your own behavior. Be more patient and understanding than those who are rude or gruff.

* Understand that some people aren't coping well with their money problems. A

sleepless night could mean they will doze off in a meeting or avoid conversation with co-workers. If you know them well, reach out and be a good listener. Be careful not to reveal a confidence.

* Look ahead to better times. Predict boom rather than gloom, advises professor P.M. Forni, founder of the Civility Institute. Watch for hopeful developments. Optimistic conversation creates a more positive mood for everyone at home or at work.

* Offer reassurance. Ask a friend how he is doing. Let co-workers know your relationship is in good standing. Talk to your kids about a situation that will affect them. Continue to have family fun like roasting hot dogs in the park.

* Talk to your people. If you're the boss, give them candid information but include something positive. If you're not the boss, listen carefully.

Post and Forni remind us that this is a resilient nation and much better times are coming.

Kind, respectful and considerate behavior will help to get us there.

Post and Forni were recently interviewed by USA Weekend.



Client Spotlight

Congratulations to Leonel benefits so Leonel eventually lost his apartment and he and his kids were kicked out. Leonel and his family stuck it out through their difficulties. Finally, this month the company paid a substantial confidential settlement to Leonel and his family that will enable him to have the financial means to provide for him and his family.

In 2009, Fire Prevention Week Focuses on Preventing Burns

Hot foods are common causes of burns in children, according to the National Fire Protection Association, and adults are not exempt.

* Keep hot foods and liquids away from counter edges. Know where kids are before you carry a hot dish to the table.

* Keep pan handles pointed away from the floor to avoid spilling their hot contents on someone.

Scalds from hot bath water can cause burns or even death in a small child. Remember that children and older adults burn more easily.

* Set the water heater thermostat at 120 degrees rather than higher.

* Always test the water temperature with your wrist, elbow or back of your hand before bathing a child. Don't depend on a tub's water tem-

perature indicator. Keep water at 100 degrees.

Cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires, often because a person leaves the room while food is being fried, grilled or broiled.



* Turn fast-cooking foods off when answering the door or telephone and when you have to go to another room for a time.

* When simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly. Don't leave the house. Set a timer.

Smoke alarms can be life savers ... if they are working.

* Install one outside of each sleeping area. If you can, connect all alarms so they will go off at the same time. Test smoke alarms once a month and replace them every 10 years.

* Design a fire escape plan that has at least two ways out of every room. Practice the plan with your family.

* When the smoke alarm sounds, get out of the house and stay out.

The heat is on!

* Use a fireplace screen to keep sparks inside. Have the chimney cleaned and the central heating system inspected.

* Turn portable space heaters off when you will go to bed or spend time in another room. Be sure there are no curtains, paper, furniture or other combustibles within three feet of the heater.

Get Rid of the Fallen Leaves with These Tactics

* Mow and mulch. If leaves aren't too deep, mowing with a mulching lawn mower blade is a good choice. After you chop them up, it's OK to leave them on the grass. Mulched leaves are good for grass, says Michigan State University.

Deeper leaves in an area can be mulched by going over them a few times. You have to spread the mulch with a rake so it's not too deep.

* Use a leaf blower. It will work very well on smaller lawns. For big yards, carry- or backpack-types are

best used for blowing leaves out of flower beds and from around bushes.

* If you like to work the leaves and have a big yard, you could get a 6-horsepower DR Power Equipment walk-behind leaf and lawn vacuum. Check one out at www.drpower.com.

* Many leaf catchers can be attached to riding lawn mowers.

* Rake your leaves. Occupational therapists recommend warming up and stretching before starting and

taking shorter strokes so you don't reach as far. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons suggests wearing gloves to prevent blisters and bending at the knees rather than the waist.

Avoid twisting motions while raking, which could injure your back, and take extra care when leaves are wet or slippery. Don't do too much at one time.

To bag leaves, rake the stack onto an old sheet or a tarp, then dump the stack into a leaf bag.



New U.S. Automotive Products are Coming

Flex fuel vehicles and hybrids have been around a few years now. That is old news. The new news is that two fledgling U.S. automakers are attempting to market green or specialty niche vehicles to suit today's market.

New vans, trucks for the future

A new American company, led by a veteran of General Motors? EVI (Electric Vehicles International) program plans to put thousands of plug-in hybrid delivery vans on the road by 2012 and promises 100 miles per gallon!

Bright Automotive rolled out its prototype truck, The Idea, in April and showed Congress what it can do. It is aimed at specific markets like communications firms, cable companies and the U.S. Postal Service. It will have 180 cubic feet of cargo space and

accommodate a 2000-pound payload.

Like other hybrids, it will run on a dual power train driven by gasoline and batteries with automatic switching when batteries ebb low. Bright is still shopping for an engine supplier and is seeking startup money from the Department of Energy.

Police pursuit cruisers

Carbon Motors, another new American company, has more than 10,000 reservations to build its E-7 specialty police cruiser. Carbon Motors recently selected Connersville, Indiana for its proposed headquarters and manufacturing operations.

The Atlanta-based startup maker of high-tech police cars intends to invest \$350 million to locate its

production headquarters in a 1.8-million-square-foot facility. The company said it could create 1,550 jobs within three years.

The cruiser will come equipment-ready with more than 50 police options plus a comprehensive service program aimed at long service.

Cars powered by natural gas

Toyota is planning a new car powered by compressed natural gas. The Camry will debut at the Los Angeles Automotive Show in November.

More hybrids

With hybrids already being produced by Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and others, the country's automotive future looks brighter.

Staying Well : *The Best Times and Best Ways to Wash Up*

* Wash your hands before lunch, especially after a meeting or church service where everybody shakes hands.

* Wash after you use the bathroom, change a diaper, sneeze, cough or blow your nose.

* Do it after you ride on public transportation or go shopping.

* Sanitize or wash every couple of hours during cold and flu season. Germs stay on door handles, desks, pens and everything people touch.

Here's how to wash

Use soap and water if it's available. Studies show it removes more viruses than alcohol-based hand rubs.

Use enough soap to work up a lather.

Lace your fingers together to cover all surfaces and rub the finger tips of each hand on the other hand. Wash for about 15 seconds or as long as it takes to sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Dry your hands on paper towel- ing if it's available, rather than use a hand dryer.





ACCIDENT & INJURY LAWYERS

VUJASINOVIC & BECKCOM, P.L.L.C.

Vujasinovic & Beckcom P.L.L.C

1001 Texas Avenue
Suite 1020
Houston, TX 77002
Phone: 713.224.7800
Toll Free: 877.724.7800
Fax: 713.224.7801
Email: Brian@VBattorneys.com
www.VBattorneys.com

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Speaking of Safety: *High School Softball Risk*



Serious injuries to the faces of pitchers have prompted use of pitchers' acrylic face masks. Some coaches and parents want these masks to become required softball equipment.

New equipment has made the sport

more dangerous. The combination of tighter-wound softballs and strong composite bats can propel the ball back to the pitcher at about 100 mph.

A number of serious injuries have occurred, according to the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research. One injury was fatal.

Coaches wanted the distance from the pitching rubber to the batters' box to be increased from 40 feet to 43 feet. That change is slated to go into effect nationally in 2010.



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